

DECONFINEMENT : RETURN TO ABNORMAL!

16 March began an exceptional period for France. Millions of French people accepted, without hesitation, to be assigned to residence for an indefinite time. At Gerep, out of a personal desire to improve the quality of life for our staff more than crystal gazing, I had wanted to develop teleworking. A choice made easier by the digital shift that we embarked on in 2017. Also, as soon as the general lockdown was announced, we immediately switched to 100% teleworking, but continued to offer full services.

To prepare for the next step, I wanted to know how staff had lived through this unprecedented experience and how they envisaged breaking out of confinement.

Teleworking: a profitable experience for a large majority of our staff

Although confinement required a certain period of adaptation, most of our employees got up to cruising speed very quickly and smoothly. For 65% of them, teleworking was a very positive experience and only 5% found it rather hard. The remaining 30% saw as many benefits as disadvantages. Naturally, many people welcomed flexible working hours and not having to spend time commuting. Many staff say teleworking helped them be more focused and more productive.

The feeling of isolation and distance from colleagues was obviously part of the downside. However, this negative factor was largely mitigated in those teams who embarked on plentiful video-conferences. In some rare cases, people found it difficult to work without papers, files or equipment such a second screen. But, overall, digital tools for customer relationship management, workflow automation and project management proved to be effective and were appreciated by everyone. After this break so skilfully managed, we would have liked to celebrate this success with the project team who drew up the teleworking guidelines, and who put it all into practice. But, unfortunately, that will have to wait...

Will teleworking lead to work stoppages?

Deconfinement, which kicks off on 11 May, is not a return to normal. It is a new challenge, even greater than confinement itself. A staff survey reveals that there is a high level of anxiety, no doubt strongly fuelled by the media. Post-confinement stress appears to be greater than the stress

Depuis plus de 30 ans Gerep créé avec les entreprises des solutions en termes de protection sociale, santé, prévoyance, retraite, épargne salariale, QVT et bien d'autres. Nous mettons à votre disposition des équipes dédiées pour proposer aux entreprises et à leurs salariés des solutions adaptées à leur besoins en accord avec nos valeurs d'expertise, de service et de technologie.

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generated by lockdown. Many people fear for their health and even their lives, and that of their loved ones. The feeling of vulnerability to the virus has exploded and goes beyond anything rational and what statistics can tell us about populations at risk. Consequently, basic sanitation - masks, hand sanitiser and cleaning of premises - is not sufficient to reassure people. The sources of concern abound: public transport, lunch breaks, meetings etc.

No less than 70% of our staff would like to continue remote working at least three days a week. At Gerep, therefore, it will be deconfinement "à la carte". The need to organise on-site facilities will not prevent us from favouring 80% teleworking. But starting back at work has given rise to the need for organisational and psychological support. This situation more than highlights the employee support mechanisms we have put in place. In the present context, I want to go further than just the hotlines already in place by asking clinical psychologists to take the initiative of calling employees.

Let us not underestimate the threats that lie in wait for us. Even if our companies have suffered, and declining business is unfortunately a real threat, it is essential to deal with staff anxiety and to act. Otherwise, we risk finding that the triumph of teleworking translates into time off work.

Damien Vieillard-Baron

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